

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6471

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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LAGOS FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, CM

SUBJ: CAMEROON COCOA DEVELOPMENTS

REF: YAOUNDE 2207

1. ON 28 AUGUST MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND PLAN YOUSOUFA DAOUDA ANNOUNCED THAT CAMEROON'S 1977/78 COCOA CROP WOULD AMOUNT TO 105,008 T, AN INCREASE OF 25 PERCENT OVER THE PREVIOUS YEARS EXTREMELY LOW 84,000 T. DURING THE LATE SIXTIES AND EARLY SEVENTIES CAMEROON CONSISTENTLY PRODUCED OVER 100,000 T OF COCOA ANNUALLY, REACHING A PEAK OF 123,000 T IN 1971/72. FROM 1971/72 TO 1976/77 PRODUCTION STEADILY DECLINED. THE INCREASE THIS YEAR PERHAPS INDICATES THAT THE PRODUCTION DECLINE HAS FINALLY BOTTOMED OUT.

2. THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER "CAMEROON TRIBUNE" ANNOUNCED ON 28 AUGUST THAT THE PRICES TO COCOA PRODUCERS FOR THE 1978/79 SEASON WOULD BE INCREASED TO FCFA 260 PER KILO FOR GRADES I AND II AND WOULD REMAIN AT FCFA 90 PER KILO FOR BELOW STANDARD BEANS (CURRENTLY FCFA 220 EQUAL UNCLASSIFIED

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TO \$1) THE PRICE FOR GRADES I AND II IS AN INCREASE OF 18.2 PERCENT OVER THE 1977/78 PRICE OF FCFA 220 PER KILO, WHICH IN TURN WAS ITSELF AN INCREASE OF 44 PERCENT OVER THE VERY LOW PRICES OF 1976/77.

3. COMMENT: THE GURC BELIEVES (CORRECTLY) THAT THE GROWTH IN PRODUCTION IS AT LEAST PARTIALLY DUE TO THE

PRICE INCREASES. OTHER FACTORS WERE (A) EXTENSIVE
GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES TO ENCOURAGE THE REGENERATION OF
OLD TREES AND THE USE OF FERTILIZERS AND INSECTICIDES,
AND (B) MOST IMPORTANTLY, EXCELLENT WEATHER, WHICH TOGETHER
ENABLED CAMEROON TO PERHAPS REVERSE THE TREND OF
THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.
SMYTHE

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